

Social Determinants of Health: Supportive Housing

Background

The research is clear. Homelessness, and unstable housing contribute to poor health.

Homelessness is traumatic and cyclical. People who experience homelessness are at risk for physical and mental health conditions as well as substance use disorders.

Nearly 1 in 5 adults in Washington State has a behavioral health diagnosis, and 1 in 25 has a serious mental health condition. About 1 in 11 adults has a substance use disorder, and, on any given day, more than 50,000 people in the state receive treatment.

Supportive housing services

These services identify people in need, help them obtain safe and affordable housing, and provide support so they can maintain housing. They do not replace services that are currently available, and they do not pay for room and board.

The goal is to match people to independent housing that meets their needs and provide them with services to keep housing long-term.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Evidence Based Practice

Supportive housing helps people live healthier lives by addressing their housing needs. Using evidence-based programs increases the likelihood of success – for people and for the many available programs.

The Health Care Authority's Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery (DBHR) housing models are evidence-based. The programs use quality improvement tools called fidelity scales to track performance against model standards. The goal is to improve services and achieve better housing.

Quality improvement efforts include incentivizing fidelity reviews and asking partners to participate in our cross-site learning collaborative. The

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standards ensure consistent, updated, quality expectations for permanent supportive housing services while providing guidance and pathways for improvement.

SAMHSA's Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) toolkit outlines the essential components for supportive housing services and programs for people living with behavioral health obstacles. The toolkit discusses how to develop and integrate evidence-based programs in mental health systems. SAMHSA's EBP is based on seven (7) dimensions of permanent supportive housing:

- Choice of housing
- Separation of housing and services
- Decent, safe, and affordable
- Housing integration
- Rights of tenancy
- Access to housing
- Flexible, voluntary, services

Housing first: What it is and why is it important?

Housing first is an approach that prioritizes providing permanent housing to people experiencing homelessness. When people have access to housing they can pursue personal goals, become healthier, and improve their quality of life.

Housing First does not mandate participation in services to find or retain housing.

Supportive housing programs serve people with specific needs, including those who have been staying in residential care facilities and those who have experienced homelessness.

Why we choose evidence based practices

In 2013, SB 5732 and HB 1519 were passed which directed the state to use evidence-based, research-based, and promising practices. This led DBHR to participate in two nationally recognized policy academies which guided many of our activities to implement evidence-based practices.

DBHR training opportunities

The DBHR training team is available for trainings and technical assistance for supportive housing.

These trainings include one on one agency focused trainings, regional events and monthly webinars

that focus on skill-building and resource topics. These resources help providers learn more about evidence-based practices, the importance of implementing continuous quality improvement strategies, and how to prepare for fidelity reviews.

- To receive regular updates and announcements for upcoming housing training events please email Kimberly.castle@hca.wa.gov
- You can receive information about Foundational Community supports through our [newsletter](#).
- You can find continuing education and resources for Supportive Housing Providers [on our webpage](#).

DBHR supportive housing programs

- **Forensic HARPS:** Trueblood settlement-long term supportive housing services. For more information, please see F-HARPS fact sheet or contact Michael Donovan, Michael.Donovan@hca.wa.gov.
- **HARPS** (Housing and Recovery through Peer Services): long-term supportive housing services. For more information, please see HARPS fact sheet or contact Wanda Johns, Wanda.Johns@hca.wa.gov
- **FCS** (Foundational Community Supports): long term Supportive Housing services. Contact **Jackie Velasco**, Jacklyn.velasco@hca.wa.gov or **Anessa Boyer**, Anessa.boyer@hca.wa.gov